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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of graduates of the teacher education programs of Tennessee Technological University toward the teaching profession and the program they completed at the university. The study focused on the differences in attitudes between: (1) graduates who completed their degrees in 1973, 1978, 1983, and 1988; (2) those individuals who are not currently teaching with those who are teaching; and (3) those individuals who have completed the bachelor's, master's, or educational specialist's degree. The years chosen allowed making contact with individuals who have been out of school from 1 to 15 years. The total sample size was 1,410 with a response rate of 52 percent. Data collected by the survey are displayed in tables and are accompanied by narrative discussions of the responses. A summary of the major findings from data (both positive and negative) of all respondents includes a list of 27 conclusions. A copy of the questions that were discussed in this paper is appended. (JD)

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Teacher Attitudes Toward Their Preparation Program and Their Profession

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Introduction

Teacher education in the United States is at a crossroads. Many groups and agencies have been critical of the programs for the preparation of teachers while, on the other hand, many feel that the preparation programs that teachers complete are more than adequate. It is important to determine teacher attitudes toward their preparation programs. This type information is very valuable in the redesign and improvement of teacher education programs.

Recent research has indicated that about one half the teachers in the United States gave their teacher education program a grade of 'A' or 'B', and that the same proportion agree that the training and preparation they received did a good job of preparing them for the classroom (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll, 1984). There is a need for more definitive information than simply a letter grade.

One of the most common methods used to collect data about teacher education has been to ask the graduates to rate certain aspects of the programs. In turn, this information was sometimes used to make changes and improve programs. However, there have been few systematic efforts that would involve a number of institutions and possibly a way to judge the quality of various programs.

Attitudes of individuals toward their programs of study and the teaching profession may be useful indicators in counseling individuals who are to enter professional preparation programs. Also, attitudes may be an indicator of the longevity of an individual in the teaching profession. It is crucial to have individuals who will enter the profession and remain committed.

Purpose

The purposes of this investigation were to study the attitudes of graduates of the teacher education programs of Tennessee Technological University toward (1) the teaching profession, and (2) the program of study they completed. More specifically, the study focused on the differences in attitudes between (1) graduates who completed their degrees in 1973, 1978, 1983, and 1988; (2) those individuals who are not currently teaching with those who are teaching; and (3) those individuals who have completed the bachelor's, master's, or educational specialist's degree.

This study served as part of a series of pilot studies of instruments that is being conducted in conjunction with the Research and Development Center in Teacher Education at Michigan State University. This pilot study will eventually lead to

instrument refinement which will allow for cross comparison of data with institutions across the nation.

Importance

Many teachers go through a four or five year teacher education program only never to enter the profession upon graduation or to leave teaching after a short time. It is important for educators in teacher preparation programs to be able to identify such students and perhaps guide them into a program of study more suited to their aptitudes. The findings of this study will help those educators to predict who may leave teaching by examining the students' attitudes toward teaching. The educators will also benefit from learning the attitudes toward their teacher preparation program of teachers who leave or who never enter the profession, as compared to the attitudes of graduates who remain in teaching. Changes could then be made in the program to prevent further teacher dropout.

Methodology

The subjects for this study were graduates of the teacher preparation programs of Tennessee Technological University between 1973 and 1988. The names and mailing addresses of all individuals who completed either a bachelor's, master's, or educational specialist's degree in 1973, 1978, 1983, or 1988 were obtained from the Tennessee Technological University Alumni Office. The years chosen would allow making contact with individuals who have been out of school from one to fifteen years. The total sample size was 1410.

Each subject was mailed a form of the questionnaire which corresponded to the degree he or she had obtained, along with a letter of explanation and a business reply envelope. After two weeks a follow-up letter and an additional questionnaire was mailed to each subject who had not yet responded. This process was repeated a third time until the response rate reached 52%. A copy of the items from the questionnaire which are discussed in this paper are contained in Appendix A.

Results

As the questionnaires were returned, they were encoded into numerical data so that statistical analysis could be performed on the responses. The data set consisted of 665 subjects with 128 variables for each subject. The SAS program on Tennessee Tech's VAX computer system was used to determine means and frequency counts for the data. Means and frequency counts were calculated for each degree group, each graduation year group, and for

teachers and non-teachers. The results are discussed in the remainder of this paper, question by question. Some tables are used to aid the reader in seeing more easily the differences between graduation year groups, degree groups, and later, teachers and non-teachers.

The original questionnaires used in this study contained 52 questions. Because of the voluminous data that was collected, it was impossible to report all of the results. Therefore, selected information was drawn from the results and included in this paper. Reference has been made to question numbers (i.e., 27a). This refers to the number of the question from the original instrument and is included only for clarity. The Appendix to this paper includes a copy of only the questions that were discussed in this paper. Complete details about the questionnaire and its use can be obtained from the author or the Center for Teacher Education Evaluation at Tennessee Technological University.

Self-rating

In response to the question "Do you feel you are a(n) (exceptional, better than average, average, below average, inferior) teacher?", 80% of the respondents rated themselves as exceptional or above average teachers. The remaining 20% felt they were average teachers, and none felt they were below average or inferior. Of those respondents with a bachelor's degree, 84% of the 1973 graduates felt they were exceptional or above average teachers, compared to only 64% of the 1988 graduates who rated themselves as exceptional or above average.

In a related question, subjects were asked "How would most of the instructors in your teacher education program react to your personal style and methods of teaching?" Overall, 86.8% felt they would strongly approve or approve to some extent, 2.9% felt they would strongly disapprove or disapprove to some extent, and 10.3% did not know how their instructors would react. The percentage of respondents who felt their former instructors would strongly approve or approve to some extent were even higher for graduates with a bachelor's degree from the years 1978 (91.4%) and 1988 (93%).

Job Satisfaction

When asked "Which feature of your current job do you find most satisfying?", 33.7% of all respondents answered "interactions with students," while 20.5% chose "level of personal/professional challenge." Bachelor's degree respondents were consistent with the overall percentages, with subjects from all years choosing "interactions with students" as the most

satisfying feature of their current job, along with "general work conditions" and "level of personal/professional challenge." In comparison, master's degree recipients chose "interactions with students" most frequently in 1978 and 1988, but chose "level of personal/professional challenge" most frequently in 1973 and 1983.

Next, subjects were asked "Which feature of your current job do you find **least** satisfying?" Overall, 34.2% of the respondents chose "salary/fringe benefits." The second most frequent answer (20.4%) was "general work conditions (hours, work load, class size)," and third was "opportunities for professional advancement" with 14.6%. After breaking down the responses by year of graduation and degree held, "salary/fringe benefits" was the most freqent answer given by all groups. The Ed. S. degree holders who graduated in 1983 named "level of personal/professional challenge" as the second least satisfying feature of their current job (14.3%).

Subjects were asked to describe their level of satisfaction with their current job (or current position outside the work force) on a scale of one to seven, with one being very negative and seven being very positive. The overall mean level of satisfaction was 5.4 (SD=1.4, N=650). The level of satisfaction among bachelor's degree graduates has decreased from 5.4 in 1973 to 4.8 in 1988. The level of satisfaction among master's degree graduates has remained fairly constant, ranging from 5.3 to 5.5. Among Ed. S. graduates, the level of satisfaction reached a low in 1983 of 4.4 and a high in 1988 of 5.9.

Teacher Education Program

When asked "If you had it all to do over again, would you still enroll in a teacher education program?", 66% said they definitely or probably would, 25% said they probably would not, and 9% said they definitely would not. Of those who graduated in 1973, 56% of the bachelor's degree subjects indicated they would definitely of probably still enroll, compared to 81% of the bachelor's degree subjects who graduated in 1988.

One portion of the survey dealt with ratings of program quality. Graduates were asked to rate the overall quality of certain aspects of their teacher education program on a scale of one to seven, with one being exceptionally weak, and seven being exceptionally strong. Since there were three forms of the questionnaire, some aspects were not included on all forms. Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 illustrate responses to items which appeared only on the bachelor's degree forms of the survey, tables 6-9 illustrate responses to items which appeared only on the master's degree form of the survey, tables 10-13 illustrate responses to items which appeared only on the Ed. S. degree form

of the survey, and Table 5 illustrates responses to the one item which appeared on all three forms of the survey.

Table 1. Question 27(a) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of your teacher education program?

Year of Graduation	B.S.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	134	4.6	1.4
1978	123	4.8	1.3
1983	77	4.7	1.4
1988	56	5.1	1.3

The mean response to question 27(a) was 4.75 (S.D.=1.3, N=390). The 1988 graduates gave a slightly higher rating of their teacher education program of 5.1 (Table 1). On item 27(b), the overall mean was 5.12 (S.D.=1.3, N=389). Only the 1973 graduates rated the quality of courses in their major field lower (4.9) than the overall mean (Table 2).

Table 2. Question 27 (b) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of courses in your undergraduate major field.

Year of Graduation	B.S.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	134	4.9	1.4
1978	122	5.2	1.3
1983	77	5.4	1.1
1988	56	5.3	1.3

Table 3. Question 27(c) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of the liberal arts/general education courses you have taken.

Year of Graduation	B.S.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	134	4.6	1.2
1978	122	4.5	1.3
1983	77	4.6	1.4
1988	56	4.7	1.1

Table 4. Question 27(d) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of your student teaching experience?

Year of Graduation	B.S.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	133	5.0	1.6
1978	122	5.3	1.7
1983	75	5.6	1.6
1988	56	6.0	1.6

Table 5. Question 27(e) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of the advice/counseling you received from your academic advisor (in your major)?

Year of Graduation	B.S.			M.A.			Ed. S.		
	N	X	SD	N	X	SD	N	X	SD
1973	132	4.3	1.9	32	5.3	1.6		*	
1978	123	4.5	1.9	57	5.2	1.7	8	6.0	1.4
1983	76	5.0	1.7	59	5.5	1.6	16	6.4	1.0
1988	56	4.4	2.0	73	5.9	1.5	19	6.6	0.7

*The sample size was too small to be included in the means

The overall mean rating of item 27(c), liberal arts and general education courses, was 4.6 (SD=1.2, N=389). The means of the graduates from the four year groupings stayed near this mean, with a range from 4.5 to 4.7 (Table 3). Graduates rated the quality of their student teaching experience on item 27(d). The ratings climbed steadily from a 5.0 in 1973 to a 6.0 in 1988 (Table 4). The overall mean on this item was 5.4 (SD=1.7, N=386).

Question 27(e) was the only item included in all three forms of the survey, and dealt with the quality of advice/counseling the subjects received from their academic advisors in their majors. Subjects who had completed a master's program consistently rated the quality of advice higher than subjects with a bachelor's degree. Moreover, subjects who had completed the educational specialist degree consistently rated the quality of advice higher than the master's degree subjects (Table 5). The overall mean rating of academic advice/counseling was 4.98 (SD=1.8, N=655). In comparison to this overall mean, Ed. S. subjects' lowest mean rating was 6.0 and their highest was 6.6 (Table 5).

The next set of items appeared only on the master's degree surveys. Question 27(f) asked the subjects to rate the overall quality of their graduate program. The overall mean rating was 5.4 (SD=1.1, N=223). When divided by graduation year, the respondents' ratings did not vary much from the overall mean, with a range from 5.2 to 5.5 (Table 6).

Next, subjects were asked to rate the overall quality of the courses in their graduate major field. The overall mean was 5.5, and after being divided by year of graduation, the respondents' ratings did not vary much from the mean. However, they did show a gradual increase from 5.4 in 1973 to 5.7 in 1988 (Table 7).

Graduates were asked to rate the quality of instructional resources (i.e., library) available to them in question 27(h). The 1973 graduates gave the highest mean rating of 5.3, while the 1978 and 1988 gave lower mean ratings of 4.9 (Table 8). The overall mean rating was 5.0 (SD=1.3, N=221).

The master's degree subjects were asked to rate their graduate field experiences, one of the last activities of their program. The overall mean rating was 4.9 (SD=1.5, N=215), and the graduates mean ratings increased from 4.7 in 1973 to 5.2 in 1988 (Table 9).

Table 6. Question 27(f) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of your graduate program?

Year of Graduation	M.A.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	32	5.3	1.3
1978	57	5.2	1.2
1983	59	5.4	1.0
1988	73	5.5	1.1

Table 7. Question 27(g) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of courses in your graduate major field?

Year of Graduation	M.A.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	32	5.4	1.4
1978	57	5.5	1.2
1983	59	5.5	1.0
1988	72	5.7	1.1

Table 8. Question 27(h) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of instructional resources (i.e., library)?

Year of Graduation	M.A.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	32	5.3	1.1
1978	57	4.9	1.1
1983	58	5.2	1.2
1988	73	4.9	1.5

Table 9. Question 27(i) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of your graduate field experiences?

Year of Graduation	M.A.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	29	4.7	1.8
1978	57	4.8	1.4
1983	58	4.9	1.4
1988	70	5.2	1.6

The last set of items appeared only on the Ed. S. degree surveys. Like the bachelor's and master's degree subjects, the Ed. S. subjects were asked to rate the overall quality of their Ed. S. program. The mean rating increased from a 5.5 in 1973 to a high of 6.4 in 1988 (Table 10). The overall mean rating was 5.8 (SD=1.2, N=45). The Ed. S. respondents gave an overall mean rating of 5.88 (SD=1.2, N=45) to the quality of courses in their Ed. S. graduate major field. Once again, when the ratings were divided by year, they ranged from a low of 5.5 in 1973 to a high of 6.4 in 1988 (Table 11).

The 1988 Ed. S. degree subjects gave their Ed. S. independent study the highest mean rating (6.3) while the 1978 graduates gave it a mean rating of 5.0 (Table 12). The overall mean for quality of independent study was 5.9 (SD=1.3, N=45). The last item concerned the quality of the subjects' Ed. S. field experience. The overall mean rating was 5.8 (SD=1.3, N=44), and again the 1988 graduates gave the highest mean rating of all the graduate year groups of 6.0 (Table 13).

Table 10. Question 27(j) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of your Ed. S. graduate program?

Year of Graduation	Ed. S.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	2	5.5	0.7
1978	8	4.9	1.6
1983	16	5.7	1.0
1988	19	6.4	0.9

Table 11. Question 27(k) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of the courses in your Ed. S. graduate major field?

Year of Graduation	Ed. S.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	2	5.5	0.7
1978	8	5.3	1.8
1983	16	5.6	1.0
1988	19	6.4	1.0

Table 12. Question 27(l) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate tne overall quality of your Ed. S. independent study?

Year of Graduation	Ed. S.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	2	5.5	0.7
1978	8	5.0	1.9
1983	16	5.8	1.1
1988	19	6.3	0.9

Table 13. Question 27(m) - On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the overall quality of your Ed. S. field experience?

Year of Graduation	Ed. S.		
	N	X	S.D.
1973	2	6.0	0.0
1978	7	5.0	2.0
1983	16	5.7	1.3
1988	19	6.1	1.1

Graduates were also asked "To what extent did your views of the professional roles and responsibilities of teachers change from the time you entered your teacher preparation program to program completion?" Overall, 30% responded "a lot" or "quite a bit," 33% said "some," and 36% answered "not much" or "not at all." Of the 1973 graduates, 39% of the bachelor's degree holders and 34% of the master's degree holders felt their views had changed a lot or quite a bit. (The number of Ed. S. degree respondents to this item was too small to be included.) Of the 1978 graduates, 35% of the bachelor's degree holders, 16% of the master's degree holders, and 38% of the Ed. S. degree holders felt their views had changed a lot or quite a bit. About 29% of the bachelor's degree, 15% of the master's degree, and 69% of the Ed. S. degree respondents who graduated in 1983 felt their views had changed a lot or quite a bit. Of those who graduated in 1988 with a bachelor's degree in education, 37% felt their views of teacher's roles had changed a lot or quite a bit, and 30% felt their views had not changed much or had not changed at all.

Item 30 on the survey asked "How would you have rated the adequacy of your knowledge and understanding in each of the following areas at the time you completed your teacher preparation program?" The respondents could choose from "weak," "adequate," or "strong." Once again, the areas were different on each of the three forms of the questionnaire.

The percentage reported reflects the percentage of respondents who indicated they felt their knowledge and understanding of the area was adequate or strong (Table 14).

The majority of the respondents (79%) indicated that they wished they had a stronger background in several of the areas mentioned in Table 14. The area chosen most often was "classroom management techniques/procedures." Table 15 illustrates which areas were named most often by which degree groups, and Table 16 illustrates the areas named most often by graduation year groups.

Question 32 was similar to question 30 in that it gave a list of seventeen skill areas and asked the subject "How would you have rated the adequacy of your skills in each of the following areas at the time you completed your teacher preparation program? Weak, adequate, or strong?" Table 17 illustrates the overall percentage of those subjects who rated their skills as adequate or strong in each area.

Table 14. Question 30 - How would you have rated the adequacy of your knowledge and understanding in each of the following areas at the time you completed your teacher preparation program?

Your knowledge and understanding of:	adequate/strong
The following items appeared only on B.S. surveys	
(1) Mathematics	79%
(2) Social sciences	91%
(3) Natural sciences	87%
(4) Humanities	89%
The following items appeared on all forms of the survey	
(5) Multicultural issues	65%
(6) The historical and philosophical development of thought in your major field	88%
(7) Contemporary educational issues	86%
(8) Theories/principles of how students learn	82%
(9) Child/adolescent growth and development	91%
(10) Social and political roles of schools in American society	76%
(11) Classroom management techniques/procedures	70%
(12) Legal and ethical responsibilities of teachers	67%
The following items appeared only on M.A. and Ed. S. surveys	
(13) Educational research	82%
(14) Curriculum development	81%
The following items appeared only on M.A. surveys	
(15) Educational statistics	63%
(16) Guidance	72%
The following items appeared only on Ed. S. surveys	
(17) Philosophy of education	84%
(18) Educational psychology	82%

Table 15. Question 31 - "Do you wish you had a stronger background in any of the areas of knowledge listed in Q. 30?"

Area	B.S.	M.A.	Ed. S.
Classroom management techniques	22%	17%	19%
Legal and ethical responsibilities of teachers	17%	11%	16%
Theories/principles of how students learn	13%	11%	15%
Special needs children	*	12%	13%

* This item was not included on the B.S. form of the survey.

Table 16. Question 31 - "Do you wish you had a stronger background in any of the areas of knowledge listed in Question 30?" (Frequencies divided by year of graduation groups.)

Area	1973	1978	1983	1988
Classroom management techniques/procedures	26%	17%	19%	19%
Legal and ethical responsibilities of teachers	18%	14%	15%	12%
Theories/principles of how students learn	16%	12%	10%	11%

The majority of the respondents felt their skills were adequate or strong in all areas except using computers in instruction (Table 17). However, it is interesting to note that 81% of the 1973 bachelor's degree graduates felt their skills were weak in using computers in instruction area, and by 1988 only 48% felt their skills were weak in this area. When asked if any of the skills listed in question 32 represented areas in which subjects were experiencing problems or frustrations in their current teaching assignments, 14% of those teaching listed "responding appropriately to disruptive student behaviors" (area 'm'), 12% listed "motivating students to participate in academic tasks" (area 'c'), 11% named "using computers in instruction" (area 'e'), and another 11% listed "working with mainstreamed or other special needs students" (area 'h').

Table 17. Question 32 - "How would you have rated the adequacy of your skills in each of the following areas at the time you completed your teacher preparation program?" Percentages indicate those who rated their skills as "adequate" or "strong."

Skill	Adequate/strong
(a) Plan stimulating and effective lessons	89%
(b) Teach problem solving, conceptual understanding, and other aspects of higher-order thinking	80%
(c) Motivate students to participate in academic tasks	88%
(d) Select, prepare, and use educational media	92%
(e) Use computers in instruction	33%
(f) Refer students for special assistance when appropriate	77%
(g) Work with gifted and talented students	62%
(h) Work with mainstreamed or other special needs students	59%
(i) Account for and build on students' cultural and academic diversity in the instruction you provide	75%
(j) Enhance students' sense of personal achievement and self-worth	95%
(k) Monitor students' progress and adjust instruction accordingly	91%
(l) Design/interpret measures of student achievement	94%
(m) Respond appropriately to disruptive student behaviors	81%
(n) Assess the expectations of the community and school administration	75%
(o) Develop and/or represent a given concept or idea in a variety of ways	88%
(p) Plan and implement a successful first week of school	77%
(q) Assess and improve your performance as a teacher	88%

Views of teaching

The last portion of the survey dealt with views of teaching. Subjects were asked to answer a series of questions in terms of their most recent teaching assignment which, for some, was student teaching. The first item asked "Which of the following criteria do you view as the most important measure of your success as a teacher?" Overall, 53% responded "the extent to which students have gained a sense of self-confidence and self-worth in my classroom," and 45% answered "the students' success in learning what I've tried to teach them." The item was then reversed to ask "Which do you view as the least important criteria to measure your success as a teacher?" A majority of 66% answered "the ability of my students to work quietly and get along with each other," and 32% responded "the extent to which students like and respect me as a teacher."

"Teachers' inadequate planning and classroom management" was named by 41% of the respondents as the most frequent source of student behavior problems in classroom settings. Another 30% believed that "conflicts between values students acquire at home and those that are prized in schools" was the main source of behavior problems, and 26% named "unresolved problems students experience outside the school setting" as the main cause. Only 4.3% believed the source of the problem was "teachers' failure to establish a warm and supportive classroom environment."

Overall, 51% of the respondents thought it was most important for teachers to help individual students deal with serious learning problems. However, 27% believed it was most important for teachers to help students deal with serious emotional problems, and 22% named serious social problems. A number of respondents did not choose a response to this item because they felt all three areas were important.

Almost half (49.8%) of the respondents said they sometimes vary and sometimes hold standards constant for all students when teaching very important content. Another 39% said they vary their standards of achievement for students with different levels of ability (higher standards for more capable students), while the remaining 12% said they hold their standards of achievement constant for all students.

Subjects were asked if they agreed with the statement "Students learn best when they have to figure things out for themselves instead of being told or shown." Seventy-four percent said "yes, but only if students have mastered requisite concepts and skills first." Eleven percent disagreed, "because some students are not capable of figuring things out for themselves." Another 8% simply agreed with the statement, and the remaining 6% disagreed for some other reason.

Concerning importance of content, subjects were asked, (a) "When students ask why the content you are teaching is important, what are you most likely to say?" and (b) "Which of the criteria are you most likely to consider when trying to decide what content to teach (or what not to teach)?" Table 18 illustrates the responses to both questions.

Table 18. Questions 47 and 48.
(a) When students ask why the content you are teaching is important, what are you most likely to say?

(b) Which of the criteria are you most likely to consider when trying to decide what content to teach (or what not to teach)?

Criteria	(a)	(b)
(1) You need to know this content to succeed in later grades or for later courses in this subject area	22.1%	27.1%
(2) This information will help you on the test	1.8%	5.5%
(3) You will use this content a lot when you get out of school; it is very important in daily living	34.2%	31.8%
(4) Knowing this content will help you understand people and/or current events in the world around you	16.2%	13.5%
(5) Understanding this content will constribute to the quality and richness of your adult life	25.7%	22.1%

Another item asked "Do you believe you can reach even the most difficult or least motivated students?" Over 60% of the subjects responded "yes, with some qualifications." Another 26% simply responded "yes," 8% said "no, with some qualifications," and 5% simply said "no."

Two questions on the survey dealt with textbook selection. The subject was told to "imagine that a textbook committee is trying to decide which of two mathematics textbook series to adopt. They have asked for your advice. Series 'A' stresses the development of student understanding, problem solving, and thinking. Series 'B' stresses the development of basic concepts and computational skills (adding, subtracting, etc.) Assuming both series are well designed and consistent with their stated

goals, for which students would you recommend Series 'A'?" Overall, 55% of the respondents said they would recommend both students who are talented in mathematics and those who have limited abilities in math. Another 42% said they would only recommend Series 'A' for those who are talented in mathematics, while 3% said they would recommend the series for those who have limited abilities in math, and less than 1% said they would recommend neither group of students. Next the subjects were asked "If you were a fourth grade teacher working with students who were at or near grade level, which book would you prefer to use?" Overall, 59% of the respondents chose Series 'A', and 41% chose Series 'B'. The percentages for each degree group and graduation year group are consistent with the overall percentages, with the majority in each group choosing Series 'A'.

The final question on the survey asked "When students fail to achieve intended goals and objectives, that failure is often attributed to one of the following sources. Which do you believe is the most frequent source of student failure?" Close to half of the total respondents (48%) felt that students' indifference or lack of motivation was the primary source of failure, while 28% believed it to be teachers' failure to use appropriate methods of teaching. Another 21% felt that the student's home background was the most frequent source of failure, and only 3% said the teacher's indifference or lack of patience was the source.

Comparing Teachers and Non-Teachers

One purpose of the survey was to examine differences in ratings of program quality and views of teaching among those currently teaching and those not teaching. Parts of the survey applied only to classroom teachers, and parts applied only to those who were not currently teaching.

Teachers

Of the 376 respondents who were currently teaching, 62% felt they were better than average teachers, 18% felt they were exceptional teachers, 20% felt they were average teachers, and none felt they were below average or inferior teachers.

Over 47% of classroom teachers felt that instructors in their teacher education program would strongly approve of their personal style and methods of teaching, and another 39% felt they would approve to some extent. Only 3% felt their instructors would disapprove to some extent, and 38% did not know how they would react.

Of those now teaching, 73% plan to still be teaching five years from now, 8% to be in school administration, 8% to be educational specialists, and 3% to be employed outside the field of education.

Table 19. Question 20 - "Why aren't you teaching at the present time?"

Reason	Frequency percentage
(1) I was offered a more rewarding job within the field of education	21.5%
(2) I needed to attend to home/family affairs	17.8%
(3) I was offered a better job outside of education	17.0%
(4) A teaching position was not available in the geographical area where I hoped to live	11.7%
(5) Teaching was not my first choice of careers at the time I began looking for a job	9.3%
(6) I wanted to continue my education	4.9%
(7) I tried, but I couldn't find a teaching position anywhere	3.2%
(8) Other (includes retired)	14.6%

Non-Teachers

The survey attempted to determine why individuals who had graduated with a degree in education were not teaching. Table 19 lists the responses available to the subjects and the percentage who chose each reason.

The non-teachers were also asked if they regretted that they were not teaching. Over 77% said no, 21% said yes, and 2% said sometimes. When asked if they felt they were underemployed, 75% of non-teachers said no, and 25% said yes. Non-teachers were also asked to what extent their teacher education program contributed to their level of preparation for their current job. 38% felt their teacher education program had been a moderate contribution, 35% felt it had been a strong contribution, 17% a minor contribution, and 10% felt it had been no contribution.

Teachers vs. Non-Teachers

Concerning features of their current job which were most and least satisfying, among teachers the largest percentage (47%) found interactions with students to be the most satisfying, and salary/fringe benefits to be the least satisfying (37%). Non-teachers' most satisfying job feature was the level of personal and professional challenge (28.3%), and their least satisfying feature was the same as that of teachers, salary/fringe benefits (30%).

The majority of both teachers and non-teachers said they would probably or definitely still enroll in a teacher education program if they had it all to do over again. About 71% of the teachers said probably or definitely yes, and 60% of non-teachers said the same. However, a larger number of non-teachers (40%) said they definitely or probably would not still enroll, compared to only 29% of teachers who felt as negatively.

Teachers' and non-teachers' mean level of satisfaction with their current job was basically the same. On a scale of one to seven, with one being very negative and seven being very positive, teachers' mean rating was 5.2 and non-teachers' was 5.5. However, 58% of non-teachers rated their level of satisfaction a 6 or a 7, while only 50% of current teachers did the same.

Ratings of Program Quality

Table 20 illustrates teachers' and non-teachers' mean ratings of overall quality of different aspects of their teacher education programs. The scale was again one to seven, with one being exceptionally weak, and seven being exceptionally strong. Some items were included only on certain degree forms of the survey, and are so designated in Table 20.

There were slight differences between the responses of teachers and non-teachers to the question, "To what extent did your views of the professional roles and responsibilities of teachers change from the time you entered your teacher education program to program completion?" The percentage of teachers who said their views changed "quite a bit" or "a lot" was 31.4%, compared to 29% of non-teachers. On the other hand, more teachers (38%) felt that their views had "not changed much" or had "not changed at all" than non-teachers (34%). Over 37% of the non-teachers felt their views had changed "some," while 31% of the teachers said their views had changed "some."

Table 20. Teachers' vs. non-teachers' ratings of program quality

	Teachers			Non-Teachers		
B.S. only	N	X	SD	N	X	SD
Teacher ed. program	227	4.7	1.3	162	4.7	1.4
Courses in major field	227	5.1	1.3	161	5.2	1.3
Liberal arts/general education courses	227	4.5	1.2	161	4.7	1.3
Student teaching exp.	227	5.4	1.6	158	5.4	1.7
M.A. only						
Graduate program	124	5.6	1.1	97	5.1	1.1
Courses in major field	123	5.8	1.1	97	5.2	1.1
Instructional resources	123	5.4	1.2	97	4.6	1.3
Field experience	121	5.3	1.4	93	4.6	1.5
Ed. S. only						
Ed. S. graduate program	21	5.9	1.6	23	5.8	0.8
Courses in major field	21	5.9	1.6	23	6.0	0.7
Independent study	21	5.7	1.6	23	6.0	0.9
Field experience	21	5.6	1.6	22	5.9	1.0
All degree levels						
Advice/counseling you received from your academic advisor (in your major)	370	5.0	1.8	281	4.9	1.9

Table 21. Teachers vs. non-teachers ratings of the adequacy of their knowledge of certain areas at the time of completion of their teacher education program.

Area	Teachers Adequate/strong	Non-Teachers Adequate/strong
Mathematics	80%	77%
Social Science	92%	89%
Natural science	86%	86%
Humanities	86%	92%
Multi-cultural issues	64%	67%
Historical and philosophical development of thought in your major field	90%	84%
Contemporary educ. issues	87%	83%
Theories/principles of how students learn	84%	79%
Child/adolescent growth and development	92%	88%
Social and political roles of schools in American society	77%	74%
Classroom management techniques/procedures	69%	72%
Legal and ethical responsibilities of teachers	65%	71%
Educational research	81%	85%
Educational statistics	58%	68%
Curriculum development	86%	76%
Guidance	65%	80%
Philosophy of education	90%	83%
Educational psychology	85%	78%

The next items on the survey dealt with how the subjects would have rated the adequacy of their knowledge and understanding in certain areas at the time they completed their teacher preparation program. In general, non-teachers felt "weak" in more subjects than did the teachers, but non-teachers did feel more "adequate" or "strong" in the following areas than did teachers: humanities, multi-cultural issues, classroom management techniques, legal and ethical responsibilities of teachers, educational research, educational statistics, and guidance (Table 21).

When asked if they wished they had a stronger background in any of the areas listed in Table 21, the most frequently named areas by teachers (in order of frequency) were: (1) classroom management techniques/procedures, (2) theories/principles of how students learn, and (3) legal and ethical responsibilities of teachers. Like the teachers, non-teachers named classroom management techniques/procedures most often as an area in which they wish they had a stronger background, followed by legal and ethical responsibilities of teachers, then theories/principles of how students learn.

In another survey item dealing with rating their teacher education program, subjects were asked how they would have rated the adequacy of their skills in each of seventeen areas at the time they completed their teacher preparation program. Teachers clearly felt more adequate or stronger in skills such as motivating students, selecting and using educational media, working with mainstreamed students, building on students' cultural and academic diversity in instruction, enhancing students' sense of self-worth, monitoring and adjusting, assessing expectations of community and school administration, and planning and implementing a successful first week of school (Table 22). Of the seventeen skill areas mentioned, teachers named four areas most frequently as areas which present problems or frustrations in their current teaching assignment, including (1) motivating students to participate in academic tasks, (2) using computers in instruction, (3) developing and/or representing a given concept or idea in a variety of ways, and (4) planning and implementing a successful first week of school. This item did not apply to non-teachers.

When asked what they viewed as the most important measure of success as a teacher, 50% of teachers and 40% of non-teachers said "students' success in learning what I've tried to teach them," and 59% of non-teachers and 48% of teachers said "the extent to which students have gained a sense of self-confidence and self-worth in my classroom." Teachers and non-teachers had very similar views on which was the least important measure of a teacher's success. About 65% of the teachers and 67% of the

Table 22. Teachers vs. non-teachers ratings of their skills in seventeen areas at the time of completion of their teacher education program. Percentage who rated their skills as adequate or strong (A/S).

Skill	Teachers A/S	Non-teachers A/S
Plan stimulating and effective lessons	89%	87%
Teach problem solving, conceptual understanding, and other aspects of higher-order thinking	80%	81%
Motivate students to participate in academic tasks	90%	87%
Select, prepare, and use educational media	93%	90%
Use computers in instruction	42%	44%
Refer students for special assistance when appropriate	76%	78%
Work with gifted and talented students	60%	64%
Work with mainstreamed or other special needs students	61%	56%
Account for, and build on, students' cultural and academic diversity in the instruction you provide	77%	70%
Enhance students' sense of personal achievement and self-worth	96%	93%
Monitor students' progress and adjust instruction accordingly	93%	89%
Design/interpret measures of student work	94%	92%
Respond appropriately to disruptive student behaviors	82%	78%
Assess the expectations of the community and school administration	79%	71%
Represent a concept in a variety of ways	89%	87%
Implement a successful first week of school	80%	75%
Assess/improve your teaching performance	90%	87%

non-teachers said "the ability of my students to work quietly and get along with each other" was the least important, and 33% of teachers and 30% of non-teachers felt "the extent to which students like and respect me as a teacher" was least important.

The views of teachers and non-teachers was also similar when asked what they viewed as the most frequent source of behavior problems in the classroom. About 40% of teachers and 41% of non-teachers felt the cause was teachers' inadequate planning and classroom management, and 30% of teachers and of non-teachers felt the most frequent source was conflicts between values students acquire at home and those values prized in school.

Both teachers and non-teachers thought it most important to know how to deal with a student's serious learning problems (53% and 47%, respectively), followed by emotional problems (25% and 31%, respectively), and social problems (22% and 22%, respectively).

When asked about their standards of achievement, 51% of teachers and 48% of non-teachers said they would sometimes vary and sometimes hold standards constant when teaching very important content. Over 40% of non-teachers and 38% of teachers said they would vary their standards of achievement for students with different ability levels, and 11% of teachers and 12% of non-teachers said they would hold their standards of achievement constant for all students.

On another view of teaching, 77% of non-teachers and 73% of teachers agreed that students do learn best when they have to figure things out by themselves, but only after they have mastered basic skills. About 15% of teachers and 7% of non-teachers disagreed, saying that some students are not capable of figuring things out for themselves.

Students often ask why particular content is being taught and why it is important for them to learn it. When teachers were faced with this question, their most frequent answer (38%) was "You will use this content a lot when you get out of school; it is very important in daily living." This was also a frequent answer for non-teachers (29%), but their most frequent answer (31%) was "Understanding this content will contribute to the quality and richness of your adult life." Teachers' second most likely answer (26%) was "You need to know this content to succeed in later grades or for later courses in this subject area."

The majority of both groups, 62% of teachers and 58% of non-teachers, believed, with some qualifications, that they could reach even the most difficult or least motivated student. Only 12% of teachers and 15% of non-teachers did not believe they could reach such a student under any circumstances.

On the mathematics textbook selection issue, 60% of teachers and 56% of non-teachers would prefer to use Series A, (which stressed the development of student understanding, problem solving, and thinking), as opposed to Series B, (which stressed the development of basic concepts and computational skills), for use in their fourth grade class of students who worked at or near grade level. Also, 55% of teachers and 42% of non-teachers said they would recommend Series A for both students who were talented in mathematics as well as for students with limited abilities.

In the final survey question which asked the subjects what they believed was the most frequent source of student failure, 53% of teachers and 41% of non-teachers believed that students' indifference and lack of motivation was the main cause of failure. Over 37% of non-teachers, compared to 22% of teachers, believed the most frequent source of student failure was the teachers' failure to use appropriate methods of teaching.

Summary of Major Findings

The amount of information collected as a part of this study can be used to draw a number of conclusions. It was felt that it would be best for the author to present the information and allow the reader to draw conclusions and inferences from the data as needed to answer specific research questions. Following are some salient points that the author feels should be pointed out as some of the major findings of the study. Limited comparisons have been made across the three degree levels and across the four time periods studied.

The information collected as a part of this study will have value in improving the programs for the preparation of teachers at Tennessee Technological University. The study has also shown the value of the use of a national survey instrument in collecting data. The instrument used in this study is being reviewed and edited for use with a larger group of institutions across the country. It may be possible in the near future to compare results across different types of institutions and across various areas of the country. Such a national data base will be invaluable in improving teacher education programs.

Following is a listing of some of the more important findings (both positive and negative) from this study of the graduates of the teacher education programs of Tennessee Technological University.

Findings from data of all respondents

1. 34% of all respondents felt that interactions with students was the most satisfying feature of their current jobs, and

21% felt that the level of personal/professional challenge was the most satisfying feature.

2. Overall, 34% of the respondents said salary/fringe benefits was the least satisfying feature of their job.

3. The level of job satisfaction (on a scale of one to seven, with seven being high) among bachelor's degree graduates was 5.4 among 1973 graduates, compared to 4.8 among 1988 graduates.

4. Eighty-one percent of the bachelor's degree subjects who graduated in 1988 said they would definitely or probably still enroll in a teacher education program, compared to only 56% of 1973 bachelor's degree graduates.

5. When asked to rate the quality of their teacher education program, master's degree program, or educational specialist's degree program (on a scale of one to seven, with seven being high), bachelor's degree subjects rated their program a 4.8, master's degree subjects rated their program a 5.4, and educational specialist's degree subjects rated their program a 5.8.

6. Bachelor's degree subjects who graduated in 1973 rated their teacher education program a 4.6, compared to a 5.1 rating given by 1988 graduates.

7. Bachelor's degree subjects rating of their student teaching experience increased from a 5.0 given by 1973 graduates, to a 6.0 given by 1988 graduates.

8. The subjects felt weakest in their knowledge and understanding of multicultural issues, legal and ethical responsibilities of teachers, and educational statistics.

9. Overall, the most frequent area named as one in which respondents wish they had stronger backgrounds was classroom management techniques and procedures.

10. Respondents also felt weakest in their skills of using computers in instruction and working with mainstreamed and other special needs students.

11. Only 48% of the 1988 bachelor's degree subjects felt their skills in using computers in instruction were weak, compared to 81% of 1973 bachelor's degree subjects.

12. The majority of the respondents felt that the most important measure of their success as a teacher was the extent to which students have gained a sense of self-confidence and self-worth in their classrooms.

26. Teachers expressed that they had most problems or frustrations with (1) motivating students, (2) using computers in instruction, (3) representing concepts in a variety of ways, and (4) planning and implementing a successful first week of school.

27. Teachers most frequently viewed the students' success in learning what they have tried to teach as the most important measure of success as a teacher, while non-teachers most frequently viewed the extent to which students gain a sense of self-confidence and self-worth in the classroom as the most important measure.

Reference

Gallup, A. (1984). The gallup poll of teachers' attitudes toward the public schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 66(2), 97-103.

Appendix

Questions from the survey which are discussed in this paper

16. Do you feel you are a(n) . . .

(1) exceptional teacher
(2) better than average teacher
(3) average teacher
(4) below average teacher
(5) inferior teacher

17. How would most of the instructors in your teacher education program react to your personal style and methods of teaching? Would they . . . .

(1) strongly approve
(2) approve to some extent
(3) disapprove to some extent
(4) strongly disapprove
(5) I don't know how they would react

24. (a) Which of the following features of your current job do you find most satisfying?

(b) Which is least satisfying? (Check ONE in each column)

Most Satisfying	Least Satisfying		
____	____	(1)	salary/fringe benefits
____	____	(2)	level of personal/professional challenge
____	____	(3)	intellectual stimulation of the workplace
____	____	(4)	general work conditions (hours, work load, class size)
____	____	(5)	opportunities for professional advancement
____	____	(6)	interactions with colleagues
____	____	(7)	interactions with students
____	____	(8)	quality/level of administrative support
____	____	(9)	other _____

25. If you had it to do all over again, would you still enroll in a teacher education program?

(1) definitely yes
(2) probably yes
(3) probably not
(4) definitely not

26. On a scale of one to seven, how would you describe your level of satisfaction with your current job (or your current position outside the work force)?

Very Negative							Very Positive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

27. On a scale of one to seven, how would you rate the <u>overall quality of</u> . . . .

		exceptionally weak						exceptionally strong
(a)	your teacher preparation program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(b)	courses in your undergraduate major field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(c)	the liberal arts/general education courses you have taken	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(d)	your student teaching experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(e)	the advice/counselling you received from your academic advisor (in your major)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(f)	your graduate program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(g)	courses in your graduate major field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(h)	instructional resources (i.e., library)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(i)	graduate field experiences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(j)	your Ed. S. graduate program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(k)	courses in your Ed. S. graduate major field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(l)	your Ed. S. independent study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(m)	your Ed. S. field experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

28. To what extent did your views of the professional roles and responsibilities of teachers change from the time you entered your teacher preparation program (graduate program, Ed. S. program) to program completion?

(1) a lot
(2) quite a bit
(3) some
(4) not much
(5) not at all

30. How would you have rated the adequacy of your knowledge and understanding in each of the following areas at the time you completed your teacher preparation program?

Your knowledge and understanding of . . .		weak	adequate	strong
(a)	mathematics	1	2	3
(b)	social sciences	1	2	3
(c)	natural sciences	1	2	3
(d)	humanities	1	2	3
(e)	multi-cultural issues and perspectives	1	2	3
(f)	American history and literature	1	2	3
(g)	the historical and philosophical development of thought in your major field	1	2	3
(h)	contemporary educational issues	1	2	3
(i)	theories/principles of how students learn	1	2	3
(j)	child/adolescent growth and development	1	2	3
(k)	social and political roles of schools in American society	1	2	3
(l)	classroom management techniques/procedures	1	2	3
(m)	legal and ethical responsibilities of teachers	1	2	3
(n)	educational research	1	2	3
(o)	educational statistics	1	2	3
(p)	curriculum development	1	2	3
(q)	guidance	1	2	3
(r)	philosophy of education	1	2	3
(s)	educational psychology	1	2	3

31. Thinking in terms of your current role as a teacher, do you wish you had a stronger background in any of the areas of knowledge listed in Q. 30 above? (If you are not teaching, respond to this question in terms of your current position.)

(1) No
(2) Yes -- Please identify the THREE areas in which a stronger background would be most helpful. Write the letters corresponding to these areas here: ____ ____ ____

32. How would you have rated the adequacy of your skills in each of the following areas at the time you completed your teacher preparation program: (1) weak, (2) adequate, or (3) strong?

		Weak---Strong		
(a)	plan stimulating and effective lessons.	1	2	3
(b)	teach problem solving, conceptual understanding, and other aspects of higher-order thinking.	1	2	3
(c)	motivate students to participate in academic tasks.	1	2	3

(d)	select, prepare, and use educational media.	1	2	3
(e)	use computers in instruction.	1	2	3
(f)	refer students for special assistance when appropriate.	1	2	3
(g)	work with gifted and talented stuoents	1	2	3
(h)	work with mainstreamed or other special needs students.	1	2	3
(i)	account for, and build on, students' cultural and academic diversity in the instruction you provide.	1	2	3
(j)	enhance students' sense of personal achievement and self-worth.	1	2	3
(k)	monitor students' progress and adjust instruction accordingly.	1	2	3
(l)	design/interpret measures of student work and achievement.	1	2	3
(m)	respond appropriately to disruptive student behaviors.	1	2	3
(n)	assess the expectations of the community and school administration (e.g., how teachers are likely to be judged).	1	2	3
(o)	develop and/or represent a given concept or idea in a variety of ways (explanations, metaphors, graphs, pictures, manipulatives).	1	2	3
(p)	plan and implement a successful first week of school.	1	2	3
(q)	assess and improve your own performance as a teacher.	1	2	3

33. Do any of the skills listed in question 32 represent areas in which you are experiencing problems or frustrations in your current teaching assignment?

(1) No
(2) Yes -- Please identify the THREE areas that pose the most significant problems/frustrations. Write the letters corresponding to these areas here: _____ _____ _____

42. (a) Which of the following criteria do you view as the most important measure of your success as a teacher?

(b) Which do you view as the least important criterion?

Most Impt.	Least Impt.		
____	____	(1)	The extent to which students like and respect me as a teacher.
____	____	(2)	Students' success in learning what I've tried to teach them.

____ ____ (3) The extent to which students have gained a sense of self-confidence and self-worth my classroom.

____ ____ (4) The ability of my students to work quietly and get along with each other.

43. Which of the following do you view as the most frequent source of student behavior problems in classroom settings?

(1) teachers' inadequate planning/classroom management

(2) teachers' failure to establish a warm and supportive classroom environment

(3) unresolved problems students experience outside the school setting

(4) conflicts between values students acquire at home and those that are prized in schools

44. As a teacher, which of the following do you view as <u>most</u> important? Knowing how to help individual students deal with serious . . .

(1) learning problems
(2) emotional problems
(3) social problems

45. When teaching very important content, do you . . .

(1) vary your standards of achievement for students with different levels of ability (higher standards for more capable students)?
(2) hold your standards of achievement constant for all students?

(3) sometimes vary and sometimes hold standards constant?

46. Some argue that students learn best when they have to figure things out for themselves instead of being told or shown. Do you agree?

(1) yes

(2) Yes, but only if students have mastered requisite concepts and skills first.

(3) No, because some students are not capable of figuring things out for themselves.

(4) No, for some other reaon.

47. When students ask why the content you are teaching is important, what are you most likely to say?

(1) You need to know this content to succeed in later grades or for later courses in this subject area.

(2) This information will help you on the test.

(3) You will use this content a lot when you get out of school; it is very important in daily living.

(4) Knowing this content will help you understand people and/or current events in the world around you.

(5) Understanding this content will contribute to the quality and richness of your adult life.

48. Which of the criteria listed in question 47 are you most likely to consider when trying to decide what content to teach (or what not to teach)? (Select one.) _____

49. Do you believe you can reach even the most difficult or least motivated students?

(1) Yes
(2) No
(3) Yes, with some qualifications
(4) No, with some qualifications

Imagine that a textbook committee is trying to decide which of two mathematics textbook series to adopt. They have asked for your advice.

Series A- stresses the development of student understanding, problem solving, and thinking.

Series B- stresses the development of basic concepts and computational skills (adding, subtracting, etc.).

50. Assuming both series are well designed and consistent with their stated goals, for which students would you recommend Series A? Those who . . .

(1) are talented in mathematics
(2) have limited abilities in math
(3) both groups of students
(4) neither group of students

51. If you were a fourth grade teacher working with students who were at or near grade level, which book would you prefer to use?

(1) Series A (2) Series B

52. When students fail to achieve intended goals and objectives, that failure is often attributed to one of the following sources. Which do you believe is the most frequent source of failure?

(1) students' home background
(2) students' indifference or lack of motivation
(3) teachers' indifference or lack of patience
(4) teachers' failure to use appropriate methods of teaching